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MB 610 Learning a Language and Culture

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Syllabus

Course: MB610 W1 (SP 2009)

Title: Learning a Language and Culture

Hours: 3.00

Published: Yes, on 02/06/2009

Prerequisites:

None

Department: Behav. Sciences/Ministry

Faculty: Dr. Dale Walker



Email: dale.walker@asburyseminary.edu

Office: SH

SPO: 899

Meetings:

During 02/09/2009 to 05/22/2009 on Tuesday and Thursday from 9:30a to 10:45a in AD305.

Maximum Registration: 30

Catalog Description: The developed generic methods of applied linguistics which equip the cross-cultural worker with methods of acquiring a field language with maximum efficiency. Meets with MB 710 on the Kentucky campus.

Objectives:

MB 610 / 710: Learning a Language and Culture

MB 610 / 710: Learning a Language and Culture

Course Syllabus – Spring 2009

Tuesdays and Thursdays: 9:30 – 10:45

Instructor: Dr. Dale F. Walker

Office: SH 319

Phone: 858-2355; SPO #899

Course Description:

(From the ATS Catalog): “The developed generic methods of applied linguistics which equip the cross-cultural worker with methods of acquiring a field language with maximum efficiency.”

This course is a follow-up to MB600 / 700: Anthropology for Christian Mission, and a bridge to MB 720: Cross-Cultural Communication of Christianity. We will be concerned with several aspects of cross-cultural living and learning, in order to facilitate communication in our various ministries.

The course has several facets, each of which could be expanded into at least a full semester’s course. Being put together into one semester here, these facets will serve as introductions to areas of life-long interest, learning, and possible research. These facets are:

An introduction to language and linguistics, as the scientific study of language;

An introduction to field methods in cultural anthropology and linguistics;

An introduction to learning strategies in language study.

Books and Materials:

Required books for the course:

1. Abbott, Edwin A. (1884; 1979) *Flatland: A Romance of Many Dimensions*. NY: Dover.
2. Agar, Michael (1994) *Language Shock: Understanding the Culture of Conversation*. NY: Quill.
3. Brewster, E. Thomas and Brewster, Elizabeth S. (1976) *Language Learning Made Practical*. Pasadena: Lingua House.
4. Marshall, Terry (1989) *The Whole World Guide to Language Learning*. Yarmouth: Intercultural Press.
5. Nida, Eugene A. (1960; 1990) *Message and Mission: The Communication of the Christian Faith*. Pasadena: Wm Carey.
6. Sandoz, Mari (1953; 1992) *Cheyenne Autumn*. Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press.

Recommended:

1. Larson, Donald A. (1998) *The Story of Sam the Sojourner: Living and Learning Well Where You Don’t Belong*. Fresno: Link Care Center.
2. Larson, Donald A. (1999) *The Story of Olaf: Learning a Language Again – First Steps in Barefoot Learning*. Fresno: Link Care Center.
3. *Lingua Links Library* (on CD-ROM). (2000) Dallas: SIL International.
(This CD-ROM is available on several computers in the ATS Information Commons. It is also recommended for home use, and for your future use too).

Required Writing Assignments:

1. An interaction paper with *Cheyenne Autumn*:

This book is an incredible account of a desperate attempt by an oppressed people to keep their way of life in the face of the massive opposition of the encroaching culture. The account is full of ethnographic information about the Cheyenne culture. But it isn’t given in a systematic way; you have to dig it out. For this assignment, follow these steps:

- a. Review the lists of “ethnographic questions”, given in the last part of Jacob A. Loewen’s “Missionaries and Anthropologist Cooperate in Research.” (This article is reprinted in Smalley, *Readings in Missionary Anthropology, II*). These are starting pointers to the things to look for in investigating another culture.
- b. Read *Cheyenne Autumn*. While reading it for the ‘story’, take note of all the ethnographic information given. You could mark in the margin the places where you find this information: use

different symbols to refer to various aspects of the culture. For example, mark anything about marriage and family structure with F; material about tribal leadership with L; information about religion with R; about healing with H; about the ways of carrying on warfare with W; information about material culture with M; etc.

- c. After you read the book, choose one of these areas, or perhaps a sub-division of the area. Collect all of the information given, and present it in a connected way. Think about what you have not been given in the book, and some further questions you would want to ask a Cheyenne about. You might speculate as to what directions further research in this area might turn. Write up your presentation in about 5-6 pages. The report is due on Thursday, March 5.

2. An interaction paper with *Flatland*:

This book is a short classic which everyone should read. You may find it rough going, but persevere; you will remember this story longer than almost any other book you read during your seminary days! The theme is very simply the impossibility of “cross-cultural” communication! Yet we believe that this *can* be carried out, and it can be done successfully. We are called to do just this.

Write a short interaction response to this book, discussing the impossibility, along with what God has done, and something of what you have experienced in attempts at cross-cultural communication. The paper should be 4-5 pages, and is due Thursday, March 19.

3. An interaction paper with *Message and Mission*:

You probably have read Nida’s *Customs and Cultures*. This book is also a classic, and it should be known by anyone concerned with the worldwide communication of our faith. In this book, Nida is concerned with the aspects of culture that we are most concerned with in this course: language and communication. You have been “involved” with a very different culture, the Cheyenne; you have wrestled with a parable of the communication gap, in *Flatland*; you are in the midst of assessing your own attitudes to another language and culture (Marshall and other readings). What insights does Nida give to all of this? How does this apply to your own life and ministry? Write about this in a creative way, about 6-7 pages. This paper is due Thursday, April 16.

4. An interaction paper with *Language Shock*:

How do your own cross-cultural experiences match up with what Agar describes in this book. Write about some of these, using Agar’s framework for description. The paper should be about 6-7 pages, and is due Thursday, May 7.

5. Reports on your language work through the semester:

An essential part of this course is practical experience with a language which is new to you. You will be working with an informant outside of class time, using techniques we are learning during class. The goal for informant work is an hour per week, for 10 weeks. You will find out as much as you can about this language (sounds, forms) and do some of the beginning language-learning tasks.

After each informant session, write up what you have learned (i.e. a language-learning diary), and give a copy of this to the instructor, for comment and further direction. These will be returned to you in time for you to plan your following informant session.

Near the end of the semester you will compile these into one report of everything you know about the language. This will be due during Finals Week.

6. Language and Culture Research Paper: (for MB710 students)

Delve into one of the classic problems of the Language and Culture field (the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis, Emic-Etic theory, Language and Gender, Sociolinguistic variation, Language change, Bilingualism, Universals of language/culture, etc.). The topic should be chose by the end of March, in consultation with the instructor. Read some of the discussions about your topic, and try to apply the discussions to a language you know.

Write a research paper (12-15 pages) which introduces the topic, presents the main currents of thought, the relevance of the problems involved, and some directions for the future, along with your application to a particular language. The paper is due Thursday, May 14.

Daily Assignments:

Language problems will often be given during the course. Some of these will be worked on together in class; others will be studied outside of class, either individually or in groups. Auditors are expected to participate in these problems, including the ones worked on outside of class.

Course Evaluation: (MB610):

Your grade for the course will be based on the following:

	<u>MB610</u>	<u>MB710</u>
Each of four interaction papers	15%	10%
Language and Culture Research Paper		20
Weekly Language Learning Diary	20%	20%
Class participation and daily assignments	20%	20%

Class Schedule:

February 10 Introduction; Phonetics LAMP, 247-312; Marshall, ch. 1.
12 Phonetics

February 17 Phonetics
19 Phonetics Marshall, ch. 2.

February 24 Phonology Marshall, ch. 3.
26 Phonology

March 3 Morphology LAMP, 9-102; Marshall, ch. 4.
5 Morphology *Cheyenne Autumn* paper due.

March 10 Morphology
12 Morphology

March 17 Syntax LAMP, 313-367; Marshall, ch. 5.
19 Syntax *Flatland* paper due.

March 24 Syntax Marshall, ch. 6.
26 Syntax

March 30 -- April 3 Reading Week

April 7 Semantics Marshall, ch. 7+
9 Semantics

April 14 Language in Society
16 Language in Society *Message and Mission* paper due.

April 21 Child language
23 Child language

April	28	Other language topics	
April	30	Other language topics	
May	5	Language and Culture	
	7	Language and Culture	<i>Language Shock</i> paper due.
May	12	Language and Culture	
	14	Language and Culture	Research paper due (MB710)
May	19	No final exam	Final language report due.